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only source available, the *archives parlementaires*, as well as to the secondary material. It is to be regretted that in his accounts of the Italian plebiscites of 1848, '59 and '60, the votes in Savoy and Nice, Venetia, Rome, Moldavia and Wallachia, the Danish West Indies, and Norway he has been content with the secondary sources only. The result is certainly that sometimes interesting and valuable information is not presented. In the case of Italy, for instance, there is a wealth of material on the Italian plebiscites in the various publications of official documents by the Italian government and especially in the excellent collection *Le assemblee del risorgimento, atti raccolti etc.* published in 1911. The British Parliamentary Papers and Cavour's letters also yield an enormous amount of information. From these sources may be had the documents containing the actual regulations under which the plebiscites were taken, as well as the official results. The Parliamentary Papers and Cavour's letters also disclose the diplomatic drama behind. From them one learns that it was actually Lord John Russell who in 1859 proposed the method of the ballot for the purpose of unifying northern Italy, a method adopted by Cavour as the best means of forcing Napoleon's hand. The result of these votes was, of course, never in doubt. Nevertheless they were far from "decorative" as Stoerk calls them.

It would also be helpful to have a more detailed account of the actual conditions under which these and the other plebiscites were taken. The method of voting, whether by acclamation, by registers, or by ballot, is a matter of importance, and it lends color to what must needs be a somewhat dull narrative.

Mr. Mattern is the first of the writers on self-determination to include the votes for secession of the Confederate States of America. Of these he gives a careful and interesting account. He is also the first to include the cessions under the treaty of Versailles. In Chapter VI he summarizes the cases of cession with and without the plebiscite, contained in the treaty, and gives an account of the German protests and the Allied answers concerning them.

In discussing the practical aspects of the plebiscite Mr. Mattern concludes that to be of value the vote must be nearly unanimous. In his discussion of the plebiscite in international and constitutional law he points out that the principle of popular sovereignty has come to be recognized almost universally in matters of constitutional law and that it may gradually encroach on the international field. The chief opposition to the plebiscite arises, as he explains, from the fear that the recognition of the right of the inhabitants to be consulted on a question of transfer may imply the recognition of the right of secession and therefore constitute a threat against the safety of the State. He concludes with the statement that if the plebiscite does come to be established in international law, conquest will be rendered unprofitable and plebiscites unnecessary.

Notwithstanding the fact that the doctrine of self-determination has been in existence for over a century there are as yet few books to which one can turn for a history of the theory or of the several plebiscites which have been held. Most of the published material represents the desire of an author to promote or to prevent the taking of a vote in a specific territory. The whole subject has always been as it is now a most contentious one. For this reason this addition to the unbiassed literature is welcome.

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Government War Contracts. By John Franklin Crowell. Preliminary Economic Studies of the War, No. 25. Published by the Carnegie Endowment for International Peace. New York, Oxford University Press, 1920. pp. xiv, 357.

Even the most casual reader of this book must be impressed at once with the serious purpose which actuated the author, for no one, not even an economist,

would undertake the painstaking examination of so many government documents except in the hope of discovering there a basis for conclusions which will be helpful in the ordering of our national life. Mr. Crowell, in making his researches and writing this book, has rendered a valuable service, for he has made clear how great a problem was involved in this country's war contracts; and by his analysis of the whole subject he has shown for each governmental division involved what were the pre-war conditions and methods, the violence and magnitude of the sudden expansion occasioned by the war, the particulars in which bureaucratic isolation (the old method) failed, and the entire series of steps by which conditions were so improved that on the day of the armistice nearly all the bureaus of the Government were proceeding in a sane and workmanlike manner, adequate legislation having been passed under which it became possible to do business speedily, in large volume, yet without injustice, and with such economy as could obtain under the existing emergency.

Such a book could not be written earnestly without containing some criticism. Mr. Crowell, in criticising, has succeeded in avoiding personalities which would be meaningless; has stuck to general principles; and, except for an occasional repetition, has presented his subject in a direct and logical fashion. He forces the reader to the conclusion that in spite of occasional instances of the paying of exorbitant prices, no such waste existed as has seemed to the popular imagination to be the case. Even the "cost plus" contracts for the construction of cantonments, etc., paid no exorbitant commissions to the contractors; and this method really saved months for the government.

The problem of demobilizing industry from a war to a peace basis is clearly explained, and the reader is convinced that this large problem was well handled; that most contractors were fairly dealt with, though individual cases of hardship may have existed.

Mr. Crowell's book, while it contains no formulation of a future policy in government contracting and purchasing, makes it evident that the possibility exists for co-ordinating these functions for all branches of the Government, not only for war service or other emergencies, but in times of peace. If such a co-ordination should be accomplished, Mr. Crowell will have rendered a conspicuous service to the entire nation, for we shall have a smoothly functioning organization operating under peace conditions which would be capable of expansion at short notice to handle the largest emergency with almost equal efficiency.

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